

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Nets 129, Wizards 106

Q. Obviously not a great game for you guys defensively. What was the cause of the breakdown on that end?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it was everywhere. I think we started off okay. We were turning them over to start the game. But I think when adversity hit us, that's when I was disappointed; we buckled to the adversity. We fouled when we shouldn't. We didn't dig in when they made certain runs. This group has never done that. That was disappointing on all of our end. We have to own that.

But that was the thing that was bothering me the most is that once after the initial start of the game, which I thought we came out with the necessary mindset and attitude, once we got hit, we didn't respond well.

Q. How did Alex getting into foul trouble, and Kyshawn for that matter, affect your paint defense?

BRIAN KEEFE: You know, those things are factors, but we made silly fouls so we've got to own that. We made some silly mistakes and we fouled when we shouldn't. We grabbed guys when we shouldn't. That contributed to the cause of those things. We've got to play through those things. That's what we did not do tonight.

Q. After a game where you say that the team did not respond well to adversity, what is the message that you have for them afterward?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we've got to collectively look at ourselves, look inward, what can we do better, come together as a unit. When you have a good group of human beings, a good group of guys in our locker room, they're disappointed in what they did. I know that. We all are. We're all in this in the collective, but that's not up to the standard that we have established how we want to do things. We did not respond well tonight.

Q. How do you try and change what the response looks like in game as a coaching staff?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's always things, leverage you're trying to pull. Obviously we took some certain units out and we put some other guys in. We could never -- we found a couple little runs there to help stave off the game, but we could never really get over the hump, and that was the mindset that we just couldn't fix tonight.

Q. Season high in shooting percentage for the Nets tonight. Did you see the level of defensive effort and intensity that you wanted?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought they were just too comfortable from the get-go. We did turn them over early; our force was there. But after that, the contest level, the force, the scramble, the hustle to make these things contested, to make them miss, I did not think was there.

Q. Year over year, where do you see any improvement in the defense?

BRIAN KEEFE: Obviously we've got to look at it. We were not good tonight. I'm just going to comment on what we did tonight. It was not acceptable, not to the level that we think we can be at. But again, we did not respond when we got hit. We gave in to that, and that was the disappointing part tonight.

Q. It seemed like, correct me if I'm wrong, the Nets had a lot of success on back-door cuts, an unusual amount probably or at least a lot of it. What did you see there in terms of why those miscues occurred?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, those were the breakdowns that were bothering us, that led to either lay-ups or open threes. That stuff is not what we obviously wanted to do, but that's the standard that we didn't have tonight. We were not communicating. Our energy level wasn't at the level it should have been, and when you do certain things like that, you're going to give up easy baskets.

Q. With Kyshawn in particular, 29 points tonight, but

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big picture, looking at what he's been able to do over the season, what impresses you most about his development?

BRIAN KEEFE: He's growing. You can obviously see that from what he's doing offensively. His ability to play out of pick-and-roll, make reads, obviously the shooting and scoring. But he would say the same thing; he was not to what his level -- even though he scored tonight, he was not at the level that he can be at, either, and that's the whole group.

Q. Knowing that you didn't like the defense that your team gave you today, what would you implement in practice for the next couple of days to kind of drive them on the defensive side of the floor?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think that's something we've got to analyze after when we get back home tonight, when we start looking at the film, where we can be better. It always starts with me. I'm going to look inward first for sure, but we've got to do that as a collective group, and we're going to get back after it.

Q. The one thing you've talked about with this group is the humanity that they have but also their own accountability. How does that allow you to have this candid of a conversation with them, share your disappointment with them, sharing their disappointment with the performance tonight in the locker room?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it's always together. We're doing this together. There's a shared disappointment. It's not anything other than that.

There's a standard that we've been doing that's been set on how we work, on how we play. That was not up to the standard tonight. We have to address that as a unit, as a group, and that's what we're going to do.

Q. How do you make your second unit better than tonight?

BRIAN KEEFE: Our secondary unit has actually been not bad. That unit that was out there tonight, the numbers have actually been pretty decent. Obviously they didn't have it tonight, but that wasn't just them. It was everybody. We're not going to be pointing fingers at anybody here. We're not doing that. It was the whole collective tonight.

Q. There was a stat that came out a few days ago where Alex was the player in the NBA that had to deflect more shots at the rim. It was like 50 more than any other player. What does it say about his role on

the team and also about the state of the team?

BRIAN KEEFE: Obviously he's the anchor of our defense. Probably too much at the rim, and we've got to close that off from our individual defense. But he's one of the best rim protectors in the league.

Q. Bilal Coulibaly, how important was it to get him in the lineup, get him going first and working him in later in the game?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's just good to have him back. Obviously he has been in and out here with a couple things early in the season. I'm just happy to have him on the court. You can see the positive stuff that he brings. He will continue to get better acclimated to everybody. He hasn't played with some of these guys, so just getting him out there tonight was good.

Q. That lineup coming into the third or fourth with Kispert, with that group, what did you envision? Did you envision more speed, up tempo with them coming in?

BRIAN KEEFE: We've got a mixture of shooting and guys who can drive. That group has actually been decent, like I said. But like I said, this was the whole collective tonight. Not good enough.

Q. You talked about the foul trouble. With Kyshawn and Alex, it seemed like at times they were upset with foul calls. Did you see them respond poorly based on some of the fouls they thought were questionable?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it was everybody. I think we didn't respond to the things that went hard for us in the game. That's the stuff we were disappointed in. Things are going to happen in the games; how do you respond. I thought we had some good moments. I thought we pushed it a little bit there in the third quarter, but we didn't have the right response tonight. And that's not just a couple guys. I thought it was everybody.

Q. The defensive issues have obviously appeared tonight but they were there earlier in the season as well. For an organization that wants to build its identity on that end of the court, what is the role of the coaching staff and for you on what has happened so far and how it needs to improve?

BRIAN KEEFE: Got to look in the mirror first. That's on me. That's on all of us, but like I said, it's a standard for all of us. It's something we can go dig in here in the film and look. We will get better.



Q. Where do you feel like you can get better as a coach?

BRIAN KEEFE: We all can get better. I'm going to look all that tonight. I'm not going to get into all that stuff. With our team and myself individually, that's the thing is we can all improve, and we're all going to do that together.

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